

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L NASSAU 2129

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, BF, US

SUBJ: FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS

REF: NASSAU 2128

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR WEISS

1. AS SET FORTH IN REFTEL, I BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT STATE/DOD/EMBASSY SHARE A COMMON CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO THE PURSUANCE OF THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS. I TAKE IT THAT NONE OF US ARE UNDER ANY ILLUSIONS CONCERNING THE DIFFICULT NEGOTIATION WE HAVE IN STORE BEFORE WE CAN REACH AN AGREEMENT. THIS TASK WOULD BE DIFFICULT ENOUGH GIVEN EXAGGERATED GCOB EXPECTATIONS BUT, UNFORTUNATELY, HAS BEEN FURTHER EXACERBATED BY ROLE PLAYED BY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER IN FUELING THOSE EXPECTATIONS. (SEE NASSAU 2124)

2. IN PURSUING THE NEXT ROUND OF THE NEGOTIATION, WE CAN APPROACH IT IN ONE OF TWO WAYS, NEITHER OF WHICH WOULD NECESSARILY AFFECT THE RESPONSE TO GCOB AS PROPOSED IN STATE 294636 AS AMENDED BY NASSAU 2128:

A) WE COULD, AS I HAVE EARLIER RECOMMENDED, GO FORWARD WITH WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY A MAXIMAL OFFER BASED ON AN HONEST ESTIMATE OF WHAT THE BASES DOWN HERE ARE WORTH TO US CONVERTING THAT INTO A 15 YEAR RENTAL QUID. IF THAT IS THE BASIS ON WHICH WE GO FORWARD, THEN I THINK WE MUST BE PREPARED TO MAKE CLEAR, IN THE EVENT WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH WHAT APPEARS TO BE A GCOB REJECTION, THAT WE ARE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE TERMS, TIMING, CONFIDENTIAL
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CIRCUMSTANCES, ETC., OF PHASE OUT. THIS WOULD BE INTENDED TO INDUCE GCOB TO UNDERSTAND WE REALLY MEAN WHAT WE SAY AND,

IN MY JUDGMENT, WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO FORCE THEM TO ADOPT WHAT FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW IS A REALISTIC NEGOTIATING POSITION. IT WOULD, OF COURSE, ENTAIL DANGER THAT GCOB WOULD IN FACT REQUEST US TO PHASE OUT. HOWEVER, IF, AS SUGGESTED AT THE OUTSET, THE BASIS OF OUR QUID WAS A MAXIMAL OFFER CALCULATED ON THE GENUINE VALUE OF THE FACILITIES, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIS UNHAPPY CONTINGENCY. IN MY JUDGMENT, OF FACED WITH SUCH A STARK REALITY, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS GCOB WOULD ACCEPT THE MAXIMAL OFFER WE HAD MADE.

B) THE ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE TO CLAIM REPEAT CLAIM WE WERE PUTTING FORTH THE MAXIMUM OFFER BASED ON THE VALUE OF THE BASES, BUT WHEN CONFRONTED WITH GCOB RESISTANCE BEGIN TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS. TO ME, THIS IS WHAT SEEMS TO BE IMPLIED IN DOD PROPOSAL THAT WE LEAVE OPEN POSSIBILITY OF AID PROGRAM AND IMPLICATION THAT WE MIGHT EVEN GO BEYOND DOLS 6.15 MILLION IN RENTAL IF PUSHED. THE DANGER IN THIS APPROACH IS THAT ONCE WE BEGIN TO RESPOND BY MAKING SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS WE DESTROY THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR ARGUMENT THAT OUR INITIAL POSITION WAS BASED ON A GENUINE CALCULATION OF THE VALUE OF THE FACILITIES TO US. ONCE THAT CREDIBILITY IS DESTROYED IT IS NOT CLEAR TO ME WHAT THE STOPPING POINT WOULD BE IN GCOB DEMANDS OR IN BASIS FOR OUR REJECTING THOSE DEMANDS.

3. AS I HAVE REPEATEDLY STATED, I PREFER THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE FOR THE REASONS INDICATED. THIS, OF COURSE, DOES NOT MEAN THAT RELATIVELY MINOR ADJUSTMENTS TO OUR INITIAL "MAXIMAL POSITION" MIGHT NOT BE ACCOMMODATED, BUT THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE QUITE MINOR TO MAINTAIN THE AURA OF CREDIBILITY AND NOT UNDERCUT THE NEGOTIATION. IF THEREFORE DEFENSE, IF PUSHED, REALLY WOULD BE PREPARED TO ANTE-UP SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS TO KEEP THE BASES, I THINK WE WITHIN OUR OWN COUNSELS OUGHT TO KNOW THAT IN ADVANCE WHETHER OR NOT WE DECIDE TO ADOPT ALTERNATIVE (A) OR ALTERNATIVE (B) AS OUR APPROACH. IN THIS REGARD, I AGREE WITH THE VIEWS OF MY PREDECESSOR AND OF THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY THE BRITISH IN WASHINGTON: IF WHEN PUSHED BY THE BAHAMIANS WE INTEND TO BACK DOWN, THEN WE WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO MAKE OUR INITIAL OFFER LARGER. WE ARE FAR MORE LIKELY TO OBTAIN GCOB AGREEMENT, MORE RAPIDLY AND WITH A GREATER RESIDUAL OF GOOD WILL THAN IF CONCESSIONS ARE PAINFULLY EX-
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TRACTED.

4. ONE FURTHER BRIEF WORD ON THE DOD NOTION OF A "MODEST AID PROGRAM." ASIDE FROM FACT THAT, AS I HAVE STATED BEFORE, I WOULD RECOMMEND AGAINST ANY ADDITIONAL AID PROGRAM AND WOULD EXPECT STATE AND AID TO ADOPT SIMILAR POSITION, I HOPE DOD IS CLEAR THAT A "MODEST" PROGRAM IS NOT LIKELY TO BUY US VERY MUCH. AS ALREADY EVIDENCED, GCOB HAS AN ENORMOUS PROGRAM IN MIND AND EVEN IF WE WERE TO OFFER 10 PERCENT OF WHAT THEY HAVE ASKED, IT WOULD REPRESENT A DOLS 50 MILLION AID PROGRAM; A

VERY LARGE AND UNJUSTIFIABLE LEVEL OF AID FOR THIS COUNTRY.

5. WHICHEVER ALTERNATIVE WE ADOPT, I HOPE THAT SENIOR LEVELS IN WASHINGTON WOULD BE FULLY INFORMED OF THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF APPROACH DECIDED UPON. A FAILURE OF THE FACILITIES NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE VERY SERIOUS NOT JUST FOR THE PENTAGON BUT IN TERMS OF OUR CONTINUING RELATIONS WITH THIS COUNTRY. HOWEVER, AS I HAVE SET FORTH IN AN EARLIER MESSAGE (NASSAU 1955), I DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD PERMIT OURSELVES TO BE BLACKMAILED INTO PROVIDING CONCESSIONS WHICH CANNOT BE JUSTIFIED IN TERMS OF THE VALUE OF THE BASES TO US. TO DO SO WILL MAKE RESULTANT AGREEMENT NEXT TO IMPOSSIBLE TO JUSTIFY TO THE CONGRESS (ALREADY UNHAPPY OVER THE GCOB ACTION ON LOBSTERS), WILL ESTABLISH A BAD PRECEDENT FOR OTHER BASE NEGOTIATIONS AROUND THE WORLD, AND WILL CONTRIBUTE TO AN UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OURSELVES AND THE GCOB.

6. IN MY EARLIER DISCUSSIONS WITH JIM SCHLESINGER, HE AGREED ENTIRELY WITH MY APPROACH. I HAVE NOT DISCUSSED MATTER WITH DON RUMSFELD BUT WILL AT SOME POINT AND HOPE THAT MY ANALYSIS OF SITUATION MAKES SENSE TO HIM. HOWEVER, MY MAIN INTEREST IS IN BEING SURE WE IN EMBASSY ARE ON SAME WAVE-LENGTH WITH YOU AND WITH POLICY LEVEL IN DOD. SO LONG AS YOU AND OUR COLLEAGUES IN DOD UNDERSTAND OUR PERSPECTIVE AND OUR OWN PREFERRED APPROACH WE STAND READY TO PRESENT U.S. QUID PACKAGE IN ANY MANNER WASHINGTON DEEMS BEST SUITED TO U.S. INTERESTS. I DRAW THE LINE ONLY AT ANY SUGGESTION THAT I WRAP OUR OFFER IN CHRISTMAS PAPER*
WEISS

NOTE BY OC/T: DISSEMINATION COORDINATED WITH S/S-O, MR. JOHNSON
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